



The Pipeline

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Fire Safety: Knowing Procedure Could Save Your Life

In the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the tragic fires that took the lives of so many office workers and rescue personnel, safety managers of high-rise office buildings may want to take this opportunity to revisit fire safety training with their employees.

Every year thousands of fires break out in high-rise office buildings causing deaths, injuries, and millions of dollars in fire damage. While the National Fire Protection Association defines a high-rise building as a building taller than 75 feet (about six stories), most fire department aerial ladders rarely reach anything higher than ten stories.

In high-rise buildings, like those involved in the attacks, it is especially important to know when and how to escape in case of a fire. Fire safety experts say that the elevator shaft and stairwell of a high-rise can act much like a chimney to carry air (and oxygen) upward. If a fire reaches these areas, it may follow that moving air and spread more quickly.

Fire safety experts encourage companies to share these high-rise-specific tips in addition to their general fire safety training:

- Know two evacuation routes.
- Keep stairwell doors closed.
- Count the number of doors between your office and each exit, so you can find your way in smoke or in the dark.
- Close the door to the office containing the fire and close all other doors you pass through if you are the last person out.
- Before opening a door, feel it with the back of your hand. If it is hot, do not open it. Use an alternate route.

If you cannot escape the floor you are on, go to a room with an outside window. Close the door to the room and seal off the cracks around the door with clothing or paper. Cover vents to keep smoke from entering the room. Open any windows unless smoke will come in, and hang or wave something light colored outside a window. Finally, call for help if there is a telephone.

Never use an elevator during a fire. It can get stuck or become smoke-filled. Do not go to the roof. Smoke and heat rises and doors leading to the roof may be locked.

Above all, employees should not hesitate to evacuate if they smell smoke, see flames, hear a fire alarm, or simply fear for their own safety. Personal safety should be each employee's concern.

Don't Leave Mail Recipients Guessing

When you send state mail, don't make the recipient wonder who sent it.

Cabinet Secretary Viola Miller asks CFC employees statewide to make sure all mail sent from their offices bears a return address.

It's long been the rule that a return address be on every piece of mail generated by a state office and processed by the Finance and Administration Cabinet's Division of Postal Services.

Recent events in the nation and the U.S. postal system make putting return addresses on envelopes and packages a more urgent matter. Jeff Thurmond, director of the Division of Postal Services, has asked state agencies to remind their employees of it.

A return address provides no guarantee of safety, Thurmond's memo says, but "it does provide more of a sense of legitimacy than a piece of mail with no return address or only a partial one."



Fact Sheet on Obtaining and Using Employee Medical Information as Part of Emergency Evacuation Procedures

In light of recent events, many employers are developing or re-evaluating emergency procedures to ensure the safe evacuation of all employees. A comprehensive emergency evacuation plan should provide for prompt and effective assistance to individuals whose medical conditions may necessitate it. Many employers have asked how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act affect their ability to achieve this goal.

Specifically, employers have asked whether they may request information to help identify individuals who might need assistance because of a medical condition and whether they can share this information with others in the workplace. As the following questions and answers demonstrate, federal disability discrimination laws do not prevent employers from obtaining and appropriately using information necessary for a comprehensive emergency evacuation plan.

1. **May an employer ask employees whether they will require assistance in the event of an evacuation because of a disability or medical condition?**

Yes. Some employees may need assistance because of medical conditions that are not visually apparent. Others may have obvious disabilities or medical conditions but may not need assistance.

Employers, therefore, are allowed to ask employees to self-identify if they will require assistance because of a disability or medical condition.

2. **How may an employer identify individuals who may require assistance?**

There are three ways that an employer may obtain information:

- After making a job offer, but before employment begins, an employer may ask **all** individuals whether they will need assistance during an emergency.
- An employer also may periodically survey **all** of its current employees to determine whether they will require assistance in an emergency, as long as the employer makes it clear that self-identification is voluntary and explains the purpose for requesting the information.
- Finally, whether an employer periodically surveys all employees or not, it may ask employees with known disabilities if they will require assistance in the event of an emergency. An employer should not assume, however, that everyone with an obvious disability will need assistance during an evacuation. For example, many individuals who are blind may prefer to walk down stairs unassisted. People with disabilities are generally in the best position to assess their particular needs.

An employer should inform all individuals who are asked about their need for emergency assistance that the information they provide will be kept confidential and shared only with those who have responsibilities under the emergency evacuation plan. (See Question 4 below.)

3. **May an employer specifically ask what type of assistance will be needed?**

Yes. An employer may ask individuals who indicate a need for assistance because of a medical condition to describe the type of assistance they think will be needed. One way that this can be done is by giving **all** employees a memo with an attached form

requesting information. The employer also may have a follow-up conversation with an individual when necessary to obtain more detailed information. For example, it would be important for an employer to know whether someone who uses a wheelchair because of mobility limitations is able to walk independently, with or without the use of crutches or a cane, in an emergency situation. It also would be important for an employer to know if an individual will need any special medication, equipment, or device (e.g., an assisted wheelchair carrier strap or a mask because of a respiratory condition) in the event of an emergency. Of course, an employer is entitled only to the information necessary for it to be prepared to provide assistance. This means that, in most instances, it will be unnecessary for an employer to know the details of an individual's medical condition.

4. **Who is allowed to have information about employees needing assistance in an emergency?**

The ADA has provisions that require employers to keep medical information about applicants and employees confidential. These provisions, however, include an exception that allows an employer to share medical information with first aid and safety personnel. This exception would allow an employer to share information about the type of assistance an individual needs in the event of an evacuation with medical professionals, emergency coordinators, floor captains, colleagues who have volunteered to act as "buddies," building security officers who need to confirm that everyone has been evacuated, and other non-medical personnel who are responsible for ensuring safe evacuation. These individuals are entitled to the information necessary to fulfill their responsibilities under the employer's emergency evacuation plan.

More information on emergency preparedness for employees with

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disabilities can be found on the President's New Freedom Initiative Disability Direct web site:

<http://www.disabilities.gov/category/6/51> and on the Job Accommodation Network's web site at: <http://janweb.icbi.wvu.edu/media/emergency.html>.

"Off the Books" – Against the Law

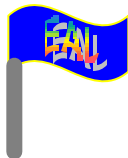
In the Cabinet for Families and Children, no one is authorized to allow employees to keep overtime "off the books".

This action is against the law and it is not permitted. Noncompliance with this law can result in Federal penalties to Kentucky state government.

Please be sure to follow the proper guidelines for requesting and working overtime, and report any known violations.

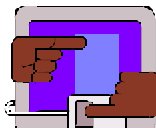
The Basic Principles of Professional Behavior:

1. Preserve the integrity of others.
2. Practice active listening.
3. Involve others in problem solving.
4. Be accountable for your actions



If you know someone who continually radiates the values projected by EAL, we want to know. Send items to:
<mailto:jean.kendell@state.ky.us>

E-Learning Provides Information on Safety in the Workplace



The following web site provides an interactive "video" with information and procedures for safety in the workplace.

http://www.cfctraining.eku.edu/tb_e-learning.shtml

Open House for the Holidays



Lt. Governor and Mrs. Stephen L. Henry invite you to the annual State Government Employee Open House on Dec. 13 from 1 – 4:30 p.m. at the Old Governor's Mansion, 420 High Street.

Governor and Mrs. Paul E. Patton invite you to the annual State Government Employee Open House on Dec. 11 from 1 – 4:30 p.m. at the Governor's Mansion.

In the spirit of the season, canned goods will be accepted at both of these events for distribution to the needy.

Helpful Web Sites



Truth or Fiction:
<http://truthorfiction.com/>

TruthOrFiction.com is billed as your email reality check. With all of the e-stories flying around the Internet, here is a place where you can "check out rumors, inspirational stories, virus warnings, humorous tales, pleas for help, urban legends, prayer requests, and calls to action to see if they are TRUTH or FICTION." You'll find the latest 'hot mail and topics' listed on this site with a specific TRUTH or FICTION label in addition to details supporting the label. There is also a 'search' feature should your topic not be on the current hot list. For those of you who want to 'get to the bottom,' this site is a great resource.

Andrews Named Director of Family Support

Diane Andrews has been named Acting Director of the Division of Family Support within the Department for Community Based Services. Ms. Andrews is a career employee and has extensive experience in the Family Support Programs. She currently holds the position of Service Region

Administrator Associate in the Big Sandy Service Region.

She began her duties part-time beginning Dec. 1 and will begin full-time effective Dec. 16. Please welcome Diane into her new position.



Your Safety Is First with CFC

This issue of Pipeline has been directed at safety and security measures for CFC employees.

We have compiled much of this information from various sources and passed it along to you in hopes that we may provide information that is useful in the event of an emergency.

Please direct any questions you may have on our safety procedures to Andrew Bland at 564-3720 in the Office of Human Resource Management.

State Holiday Closings



State offices will be closed on the following days:

Christmas Holiday: Monday & Tuesday, December 24-25, 2001

New Year Holiday: Monday & Tuesday, December 31, 2001 - January 1, 2002